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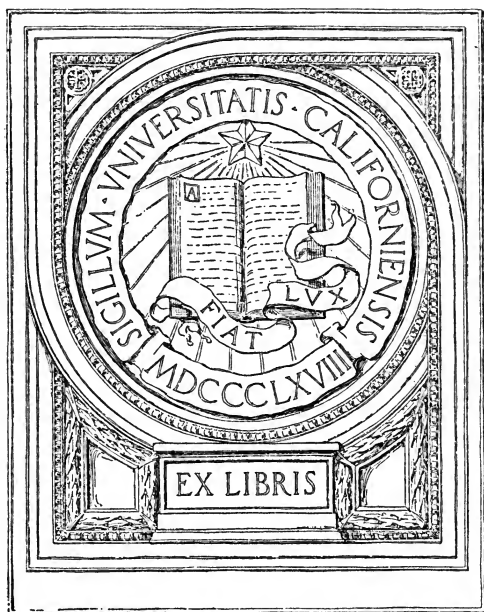
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THE DIVINE IMAGE

A BOOK OF LYRICS

THE DIVINE IMAGE

A BOOK OF LYRICS

By

CAROLINE GILTINAN

*"For this, for this the lights innumerable
As symbols shine that we the true light win:
For every star and every deep they fill
Are stars and deeps within."*

A. E. (George W. Russell)



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IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF

My Mother

HELEN McCAFFREY GILTINAN

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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CONTENTS

THE BREEZE	1
OVER NIGHT, A ROSE	2
THE COWARD	4
WHEN DARKNESS COVERED THE EARTH	5
CLOUDS	7
THE COURTYARD PIGEONS.	8
MARY FITTON, TO MASTER WILL SHAKESPEARE	10
MY HEART IS FULL OF VAGRANT SONGS	12
MATER SALVATORIS	13
WANTING SO THE FACE DIVINE	15
THE LITTLE MAID	16
MAGIC	18
REALISM	19
WOULD THE SKY BE BEAUTIFUL	20
ALL THAT I LOVE	21
"VIVE LA FRANCE!"	22
DURANCE	23
CHIPS	24
CERTAINTY	26
AFTER DARK	27

COST	28
CRY OF THE CHILDLESS	29
PROTEST	30
SHACKLED	31
TO MY VICTROLA	32
RODIN'S "HAND OF GOD"	35
HIS WOMAN	36
TRADITION	37
THE SISTERS	38
THE HUNGRY	39
BEFORE THE DAWN	40
THE INTERLOPER	41
PROFICIENT	42
MATED	43
ABSENCE	44
TOLL	45
THE CHANGELING	46
THE CONJURER	48
REAPING	49
THE RANSOM	50
ACHIEVEMENT	51
THE SACRIFICE	52
THE THIRTEENTH STATION	54
TESTIMONY	55

THE DIVINE IMAGE

A BOOK OF LYRICS



THE BREEZE::

Something touched me as I
walked
Beneath the silent trees—
A soft caress against my lips—
It may have been a breeze;

But with it came the thought of
you
And all you've grown to mean.
A wandering wind,—or was it
you:
A messenger unseen?

The bright new leaves grew very
still;
They did not dance or play.
Nor did my heart—for, in a
breath,
The breeze had gone away.

OVER NIGHT, A ROSE

That over night a rose could
come

I, one time did believe,
For when the fairies live with
one,

They wilfully deceive.
But now I know this perfect thing
Under the frozen sod
In cold and storm grew patiently
Obedient to God.

My wonder grows, since knowl-
edge came

Old fancies to dismiss;
And courage comes. Was not the
rose

A winter doing this?
Nor did it know, the weary
while,

What color and perfume
With this completed loveliness
Lay in that earthy tomb.

So maybe I, who cannot see
What God wills not to show,
May, some day, bear a rose for
Him
It took my life to grow.

THE COWARD

It lies before my wounded feet:
The cross I am to bear.
Blocking my path, it frightens me
To see it lying there.

And yet I dare not turn away,
Nor yet dare go around.
God! give me strength to carry it:
The thing upon the ground!

WHEN DARKNESS COVERED THE EARTH

Blood-guilty with blood of the
Sinless One
And tortured by memory,
Three wretched men, ere the night
had run,
Travelled from Calvary.

Sharing their grief and bitter fear,
(Since hatred had gone with the
sun!)
Shudderingly, each man asked to
hear
What work the others had done.

"I am the one who plaited
The crown of briar and thorn.
God! how His hair was matted!
God! how His head was torn!"

“And I, when He asked, denied
Him

A draught from my brimming
grail.”

“Woe, woe—unto me, I despised
Him

And drave through His hand the
nail.”

CLOUDS

(A child speaks)

Those fleecy, white and floating
things

They are the backs of angels'
wings.

They can't be impolite, you know,
And turn to look on us below,
But always keep their faces
toward

Our Lady Mary and the Lord.

Yet, I can guess what lovely
things

Are hidden by those angel-wings.

THE COURTYARD PIGEONS

Dear birds, that flutter happily
Against the grey stone wall,
That hides the joyous sun from
me,

Do you not hear my call?
Each weary day when you go
past

To strut and perch up there,—
Or when you soar away so fast,
I watch you,—and I care:
For, in your iridescent flight,
My eyes have learned to see
How, in this strange and man-
made night,

One thing, at least, goes free.
And do you know what you have
taught

In low and cooing cries?

Though much is gone, they have
not bought
The part of me that flies!

MARY FITTON,
TO MASTER
WILL SHAKESPEARE

*"The better angel is a man right
fair,
The worser spirit a woman col-
or'd ill.
To win me soon to hell, my fe-
male evil
Tempteth my better angel from
my side
And would corrupt my saint to
be a devil
Wooing his purity with her foul
pride."*

So long a time, and is it fair to
keep
My image darkened in your
bitter word
That stabs my heart, though
dust, as if a sword

Turned there to wound, and made
the wound more deep?

Had I been foul, would both your
angels weep?

Though the times spurned, to
me a singing bird

Your vision came in music my
being heard

Color'd with Prospero's island-
haunted sleep.

Why was I blind, when most I
wished to see—

Accepting less than what was
tossed away:

Unknowing then, this world
beyond what seems—

This world from which you have
exilèd me?

Around your moods, I, as your
angel, play;

And am a part of all your
greatest dreams!

MY HEART IS FULL OF VAGRANT SONGS

My heart is full of vagrant songs
That, flashing to and fro,
Escape the words which covet
 them
And tease me as they go.

But in the woods they seldom
 come;
Underneath the trees
My songs are silent, for I hear
More lovely sounds than these.

The stream is dashing over rocks:
Two voices can be heard.
From where the green is still and
 thick
Come the love-notes of a bird.

MATER SALVATORIS

Against thy breast and covered
with thy hair

Christ Jesus lay, for God so
trusted thee

His only Son was born — dear
mystery! —

A helpless Baby, needing all thy
care.

Sweet Mary, was He even then
aware —

The little Saviour shepherds
came to see

In Bethlehem — that to His
Calvary

Thy love must follow and His
Passion share?

And ever since, each sinner is thy
child

For whom thy tender pity doth
beseech;

My Blessed Lady, take me to
my Brother.

He would forgive, if only once
He smiled:

With memories, His heart of
mercy reach,

For God is Love and thou—
thou art His Mother.

WANTING SO THE FACE DIVINE

To M——

Wanting so the Face divine,
I searched within this soul of
mine,
But there the Image is so dim:
Unlike, unlike, it seems to Him.

Weary of heart, with faith grown
weak,
Again, the vanished Face I seek.
Lo! in my need, God sends me
thee:
And from thy soul, He smiles on
me!

THE LITTLE MAID

Three Saints of Heaven wanted,
long ere thy life began,
One perfect little earth-child and
asked God for *thee*, Jeanne.
Saint Michael, strong and valiant;
Saint Margaret, mother, queen;
Saint Catherine, virgin, saw thee,
a little maid, thirteen.
Then each one came to visit thee,
bewildered, frightened child,
And each one gave a gift most rare
to still thy heart so wild.
Saint Catherine kept thee chaste
and sweet; Saint Michael, like
a man;
Thy beauty, courage, strength of
soul, Saint Margaret mothered,
Jeanne.
Each Saint so loved thee each one
stayed a constant guardian . . .

They saved thee for the Sacred
Breast whose Heart most loves
thee, Jeanne!

MAGIC

A world transformed! There
 flashes

 One vivifying gleam:
My heart, the tabernacle,
 I, warder of the Dream.

REALISM

Did planning bugs and toads and
worms

Make the Creator sad?

Well, at the Thought of wooded
hills,

I think that God was glad.

WOULD THE SKY BE BEAUTIFUL?

Would the sky be beautiful if it
were not blue;

And if the grass were not so green

Would crocuses peep through?

Suppose the morn came silently

Without this burst of song;

And had we never loved, my dear,

Would all our days seem long?

But God has made the sky all
blue;

The grass a vivid green;

While just beneath the softened
mold,

A garden grows unseen.

And I—I call thee through the
dawn

When birds awake to sing:

Oh, Life is full of mystery:

Belovèd, it is Spring!

ALL THAT I LOVE

All that I love lies sleeping
Under a new-made mound.

To-night I see the sky again:
And the moon is nearly round.

“VIVE LA FRANCE!”

In a crowded car we crossed the
bridge,
Packed in like silly sheep
With more than one resenting
A rudely broken sleep.
The river slowly sullen,
The sky a sordid grey,
And drizzling rain combined to
make
A dull and cheerless day.
Arrestingly, we saw it:
A poorly printed scrawl
In chalk which stood out clearly
Against an old black wall.
Life suddenly grew vital
In one, swift, thrilling glance:
A heart and soul had blazoned
there
The letters: “VIVE LA FRANCE!”

DURANCE

My friend, God-given with the
years,
This night of agony
Too deep and sharp for words or
tears,
I offer all for thee.

Where is the feeling heart of me?
A thing of stone lies there:
Can waiting, helpless misery
And speechless grief be prayer?

CHIPS

On brooks and rivers, creeks and
streams,
Were logs and rafts and chips
afloat;
But on some shore, dreaming its
dreams,
A worthless chip said: "I'm a
boat.

To mid-stream waters I must go;
Here the eddies only play,
There I'll feel the ebb and flow.
I think I'll make the trip today."

Yet, the shore line held it fast,
Helpless, hopeless, always
twirled,
And the hurrying boats went past
While the chip unceasing swirled.
Then he came — a little child —
To the bank to sail a ship

And, with rapture almost wild,
He saw one in the lonely chip.

With boyish, laughing, shouting
joy

He worked to set the new boat
loose;

It sailed, a bobbing, happy toy —
A chip that realized its use.

And I, a woman, idly float
Quite near the shore, a useless
chip.

I pray a Child who wants a boat
Believes I am His waiting ship.

CERTAINTY

Sleep, darling, in my arms
Nestled close against my breast,
Here you're safe from all harms,
And so, we both know rest.
Your roughened head fills so well
The warm nest God made to fit;
Your soft flesh, relaxing, fell
Clinging and content in it.

Your sweet, moist breath, and
each start
Tell me of the coming goal.
Selfish I press to my heart
The body of the dreaming soul,
(Begging so) and whisper lowly,
Wanting a good-bye from you,
And the heavy lids lift slowly:
"Yes; me lub you. Sure I do!"

AFTER DARK

When muzzer and me go up the
stairs,

I undress quick and say my
prayers.

And den, when all of dem is said,
And jes' before I hop in bed,

My muzzer and me, we has a
chat;

We hug and kiss — I 'member
dat.

I'm almost t'ree and getting tall —
An' after dat,— why dat is all!

COST

Little Boy in the manger
Who saved a world from woe,
Did You lie there freezing?
She could not have it so!
Snuggled against her throbbing
 breast,
Wrapped in her own soft hair,
Warmth You shared with every
 breath,
Happy and peaceful there.

But when You left her shielding
 arms,
Saviour of fallen men,
Bitter cold You did endure,—
She could not warm You then!
She could not warm Your Body;
She could not bear Your Rod;
She bore, instead, a bleeding
 heart.
Oh, were we worth it, God?

CRY OF THE CHILDLESS

My baby never came!

He is but dream and name!

These empty arms so curve and
ache

Feed their hunger. For Christ's
sake

Lift this grief, of me a part,

From my lonely breaking heart.

Let my breasts his pressure feel!

God of Pity, make him real!

PROTEST

Handmaid of a swift machine,
She acts her weary part;
While loud above the clanging
noise
Beats her rebellious heart.

Poor prisoner! it pleads for life
With protest ceaseless, strong,
Against these sterile, empty years
So endless and so wrong!

She is denied her rightful task,
Debarred from Nature's plan:
A fettered slave of a machine,
Not mother of a man!

SHACKLED

In stress and strain and whirr of
things

That complicate life so,
We hide an instinct's perfect
wings

And dare not let them show.

They know,— the bush, the bird,
the bee,—

Their part, so old, yet new;
Do all things know, save you and
me,

The work that they must do?

The prayerful wish for work
denied

Has set my spirit free.
If but, for us, 'twere simplified
As for that budding tree.

TO MY VICTROLA

Within this mute Victrola lie
strangely prisoned joys!
"Not music"? Well, what is it?
. . . How can you call it
"noise."

When twilight comes to hurt me
with memories I fear,
(For we were once so happy and
now — he is not here)
I bid this friend of melody the
stabbing silence break
And in the dusk, it comforts me
and lessens sorrow's ache.
I hear James Whitcomb Riley
his quaintest story tell;
Or Schubert leads my heart within
some eerie, woodland dell.
When Gadske sings the "Ave,"
great Gounod's music-prayer,
My soul seeks out "Maria" and
asks for strength to bear;

Or Melba sings the lovely songs
of many years ago;
And, for a change, there is a
waltz from Victor Herbert's
show;
Then Lauder sings of lassies and
other Scottish folk
Until we hum the lilting air
and chuckle at his joke.
If very brave, I listen to Caruso's
maddened cry:
"Aïda! ah, Celeste!" he sobs; so,
in my heart, do I!
There's Kreisler and Maud
Powell; the love-songs from
"Boheme"
And "Butterfly"; with lesser
things we know without their
name.
Each record brings its different
mood. When gone,—the lin-
gering light,—

And stars come flickering through
the dark and it is nearly night,
I want a bit of Chopin with pas-
sion's throbbing spell,
Where, even in his "Funèbre," it
only ebbs to swell.
Then, at the close, McCormack
who tenderly will sing
A ballad of his Ireland and make
"God bless you!" ring,
For if I close my burning eyes,
another man I see
And through the dark, I feel his
arms, and — "hear him calling
me!"
"Not music?" *This*: the power
whose poignant, piercing tone
Can baffle night and loneliness
until I'm *not* alone?

RODIN'S "HAND OF GOD"

It is God's great Hand
Holding two He planned.
They, from all else whirled,
One in the other furled,
Fill the only place
Their own in vast space.
With arms tightly clasped,
Love's mystery is unasked.
Life to life is given.—
Marble, man-riven!

HIS WOMAN

In the pale, murmuring dawn she
lay
Alone, with nothing more to lose.
Her eyes one soft white arm
espied
And lips too tired to voice her
pride
Caressed and kissed a bruise.

TRADITION

Above, about, they flutter:
Dim hands of women long since
dead

Who touch me lovingly.
These women of my ancient line,
Each with her part in me,
Are banded now against myself —
The self I want to be.

Frightened, they beg me to re-
turn;

And, clutching, hold me so!—

Help me escape these phantom
hands:

Belovèd, must I go?

THE SISTERS

Only to blur it: the vision!

Only to feel less *alive*

To be freed from this wish to
surrender

Against which I always must
strive.

To cease, for one instant, this
thinking;

To know only joy,— and not sin.

Unwelcome one guest: the grey
stranger

Who came when my Love en-
tered in.

Why need my heart fight against
me?

For succor, I reach out my
hand

To her whom they stoned in
Samaria . . .

God! how we two *understand!*

THE HUNGRY

Whom does He love the most —
The poor, the sick, the blind,
The rich, the maimed, the host
Unknowingly unkind?

The ones who strive, and fail;
The ones who have, and lose;
The ones who will not quail
Nor martyrdom refuse?

The wind went sobbing low
To His great Heart and cried:
“Dear God, they need you so,—
Who die unsatisfied.”

BEFORE THE DAWN

At night, sweetheart, I am with
thee,
For dreaming sleep unfetters me;
And, when released, my soul goes
where
Her truest, purest thought may
dare.

Reluctantly, she comes away—
A captive to the bonds of day—
And leaves one lovely word un-
said:
Dear, must it wait till we are
dead?

THE INTERLOPER

She played with Love: the little
god.

This pink and chubby boy
Was asking soon to own her heart,
For Love will have his toy.

Then bolder waxed the prankish
Love

Before he stole away;
Nor has he yet returned the heart
She cries for night and day.

A strange, strong man withholds
it now,—

A man of flame and fire! —
Love is full-grown: the little god
In manhood, is Desire.

PROFICIENT

One time I feared (before I knew
The man you've grown to be)
That you would never understand
This complicated me.
That fear is dead! Another one
As urgent, bids me tell:
When you are listening to my
heart,
You understand too well!

MATED

At last I see him undisguised —
Unkind, unclean, uncouth,—
Deceiving dream, come back and
hide
The terror of the truth.

ABSENCE

All melody comes to me muted;
All time — one eternal, dull day!
The heavens and earth have been
looted:
The soul of my world is away!

TOLL

Love seemed a fearsome foe!
Alarmed,
Her breast she guarded 'gainst his
dart.

Love came, a laughing god, un-
armed,
And slipped two hands beneath
her heart.

But, all the while, Love played
his game:
The happy time he made his
stay,—
Though empty-handed when he
came,
Not so, the Love that went away.

THE CHANGELING

Until you came, he lived with me:
My dream-child to be born
some day;

And, with our hopes, so happily
The boy and I once dared to
play.

But now, when he has grown so
real —

This child who would become
your son! —

My trembling flesh shrinks from
the feel

Of him — poor, little, wistful
one.

So, from my breast your babe I
tear

(God! if I dared to let him
stay!)

And strangle what I must not
bear:

Nor shall you drag my hands
away!

THE CONJURER

Dear little one, with tender heart
You gave to me a kiss unsought
And in a sudden holiness,
I felt the sacred gift it brought.

With bending soul, I signed the
cross —
That blessing which begins my
prayer —
Because thy seeking baby lips
Discovered mine and rested there.

From out the potent, silent dusk
My own dream-children came
and smiled.
You were not *then*, as now you
are:
Another woman's little child.

REAPING

My son and I together saw
The man (for whom I blindly
bore
This child, who never should
have been)
Slip down the fatal road of sin.

For dying Love, there are no
cries.

God! help me look into these eyes,
Too pure for pity, where I see:
“Why, mother, were you false to
me?”

THE RANSOM

He did not know (nor would he
care,)

What blocked the road to Hell;
And yet he found it lying there
When, striking it, he fell.

But he divined that he must go
Over the road he came,
And turning left it broken so,
Unconscious of his shame.

A woman (seeming from the
dead,)
After he did depart,
Came where the road was stained
with red,
And, stooping, touched her heart.

ACHIEVEMENT

The biggest thing I ever did
Was all inside of me.
There was a battle, hardly won,
With only God to see.

When I plucked out a flaming
brand
Whose evil light shone through,
The place it burned was black and
charred . . .
But no one ever knew!

THE SACRIFICE

On Calvary, when Christ was dying,

A woman bitterly was crying
To Michael of the flaming sword:
"Command thy host! Avenge the
Lord!"

And Michael, waiting the One
call,
Watched and suffered through it
all.

Then, while he stood with sword
unsheathed,

The tortured God His Law be-
queathed:

"Forgive thy brother from thy
heart;

I ask of thee the greater part."

Though Hell itself the death de-
nounced,

Saint Michael all revenge re-
nounced.

So, bitterly the woman cried
On Calvary,—for Jesus died.

THE THIRTEENTH STATION

Once you journeyed with Him,
Mary —
With your Son Who died for
me —
Sharing all He had to suffer
On the way to Calvary.

With the expiation over,
When they laid Him on your
breast,
Did a little gladness tremble
That, at last, your Son could rest?

Mother Mary, had you comfort
Though He lay there, dead and
torn,
Taking from the Head of Jesus
That embedded crown of thorn?

TESTIMONY

I stood on guard in Pilate's court
the day they brought Him
there,—

A beaten Man Who wore a
crown of thorns with regal air.
I watched while Pilate sentenced
Him to suffering and death;
He stood alone and motionless
with calm and even breath.

To die is not an easy thing, yet
that is what He heard;

Then, turning 'round, He looked
at us but never said a word.

One of the guard, I went along,
though I had asked to stay,
And it was I who walked with
Him through all that awful
day.

He took the cross in silence,— a
clumsy, wooden thing,—

And looked, absorbed and listening,
toward birds that dared to
sing.

The way was rough and stony for
feet so bare and white;

His hair was clotted thick with
blood which blinded half His
sight.

The first time that He staggered
beneath His heavy load,

We cursed and beat and kicked
Him as He fell upon the road;

But when His Mother came to
Him, He straightened up and
smiled

And whispered something as He
passed, as though she were His
child.

But after that He needed help—
so, fearing that He might die,

We called the strong man, Simon,
who was idly standing nigh.

One woman named Veronica
came near to wipe His face;

Then suddenly she kissed the
cloth and hurried from the
place.

It seemed for miles — we travelled
on; the sun grew hot and then
With one sharp, little moan of
pain, the Man fell down again.

Soon after noon we met a group
of women; they all cried

And some drew close; He touched
a child in passing and He
sighed.

To each He gave some comfort.

On leaving them, He fell

And then I heard some muttered
words,— one Heaven, and one
Hell.

On Calvary, we stripped Him,—
a fine, well-muscled Man,—

And when we threw Him on the
cross, the hammering began.
I am no girl,—I've killed my
men — my record's brave and
clean;
But courage such as this Man
showed, I never yet have seen.
We finished nailing through the
hands;—the feet required one
nail,
. . . He never deigned to cry
aloud; He knew not how to
fail.
But when we raised the cross up-
right, He saw a grove of trees
And eyes half-blind from agony
smiled at the young green
leaves.
We stood around to listen, for
from the cross He spoke;
The sorrow which He seemed to
feel was all for other folk.

Three hours He hung dying . . .
I scarcely dare to think
Of all that time. He begged me
once to let Him have a drink;
And once He called His Father
. . . and afterward, came peace.
When He sank dead upon the
cross, why should I feel release?

As they drew near,— His follow-
ers, the Mother and the rest,—
The beauty they call Magdalen
wept loud and struck her breast;
The others tried to talk to her of
Jesus and His laws,
But she would not be comforted
and cried: "I am the cause!"
A man called John was cherish-
ing the Mother while she wept.
Each one of these seemed far
away; they were as if they slept.
But when they took Him from
the cross, her arms were opened
wide,—

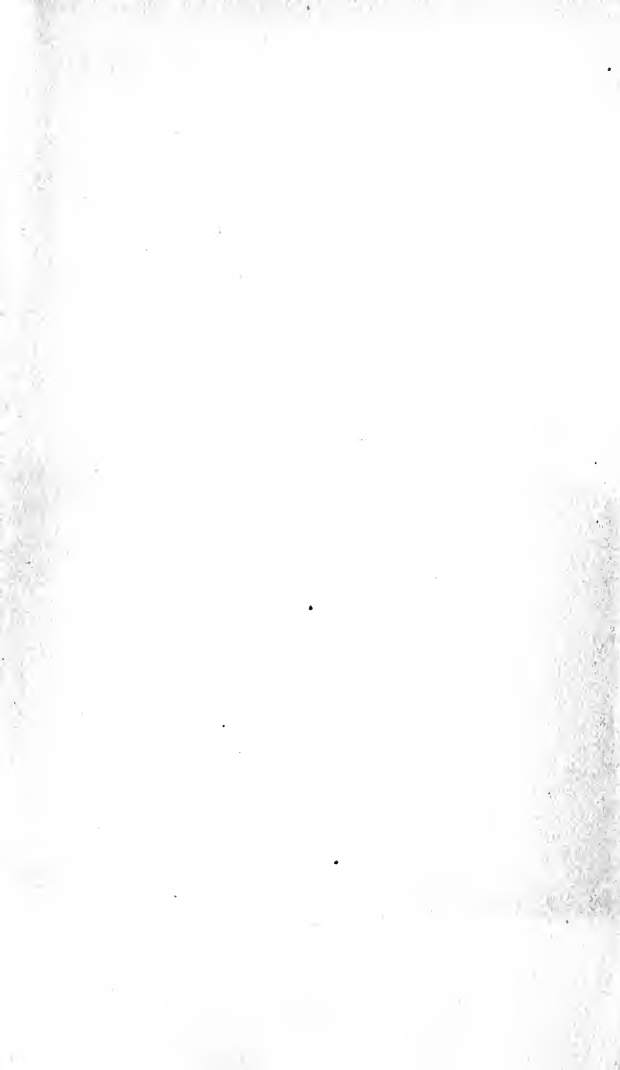
And then again we saw the blood
still flowing from His side.

She held Him tight against her
breast the while she sobbed and
said:

“Heart of my Heart, I under-
stand; and can be glad You’re
dead!”

They placed Him in the sepul-
chre (I watched until the
close);

The Man lay dead almost three
days; but afterward — HE
ROSE!



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